

## Metraux—Ethnology of Easter Island

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from French and adjusted to Polynesian phonetics, but some words are derived from English (51, pp. 31-32). Now Spanish is becoming more common, and, since the founding of a school at Hanga-roa by the Chilean government, its use will undoubtedly increase. Most natives are receptive to foreign languages. It is almost inevitable that the Easter Island language will disappear entirely.

By extensive comparisons of vocabularies, Churchill (51) has attempted to determine the exact position of the Easter Island language in relation to the rest of Polynesia, principally to the southeastern division. The statistical method of Churchill is not convincing, but his results are worth mentioning:

Of the eastern Polynesian languages Churchill found the Tuamotuan dialect to be the most closely related to that of Easter Island. His Tuamotuan material is so incomplete that the affinity of the two languages must be investigated in the light of new evidence. In the vocabularies of Mangareva which were at his disposal, Churchill (51, p. 162) discovered 651 vocables common to Mangareva and Easter Island languages. The dialects differ only in that the Mangarevan *h* has been replaced by the glottal stop. This creates an important phonetic difference between the two languages. The Easter Island dialect shows striking affinity with Maori.

The grammar of the Easter Island language is typically Polynesian and presents no striking individuality. No special gestures accompany speech. The motion of denial consists of throwing the head slightly backward and lifting the eyebrows.

## NAMES OF EASTER ISLAND

Easter Island was named by Roggeveen for the day on which he discovered it—Easter Sunday, 1722. In 1770 the Spaniards under Gonzalez had called it San Carlos in honor of Carlos III, the king of Spain, but this name lasted no longer than the memory of the soon-forgotten expedition. At first the Spaniards christened it "Isla de Davis", believing that they had found the island sighted by the English buccaneer, Edward Davis. Captain Cook (53, vol. 1, p. 288) uses Davis's Land as a synonym for Easter Island.

Cook (53, vol. 1, p. 293) and his companions, in 1774, unsuccessfully attempted to discover the native name of Easter Island. The name Teapi was obtained by the Tahitian, Otiti, who understood a little of the native language. Tamariki was also given; but both of these may have been place names. The name Whyhu (Vaihu) was recorded by the reconnoitering party sent by Cook to the interior:

On its way along the coast the expedition met a chief who was asked his name and whether he was the king of the island or of only one district. The gesture of the *ariki* was interpreted as embracing all the island, and as he uttered the word Vaihu and even made affirmative gestures when called "the *ariki* of Vaihu", the explorers were persuaded that they were speaking with the king of Easter Island. On J. R. Forster's authority (84, vol. 1, p. 509), Easter Island was called Vaihu, until this name was found to apply only to a cove on the south coast near which the interview with the chief took place.

575 The young Aamai and their cousin went to other places also—to Hanga-roa, Mata-veri, Vinapu, Ahu Akapu, Tahai, Vai-mata and Ahu-te-pen. They always went at night and were given crayfish, fish, tuna, and eels. The people were afraid and thought that they were really gods.

One day they came to the house of Hipa where they received food. The men who were carrying the food to the Aamai came to a place called Vai-hoata. The Aamai said, "Return to your houses." The men made as if they were leaving, but they concealed themselves. The Aamai took a bath in a well and talked with their natural voices. Then they took the extorted goods on their backs and went on. The men watching them said, "They are not gods but men." When the Aamai had gone, the carriers returned home and told what they had seen. The people said, "Go back and kill these young men. They are not gods, but men who imitate the voice of the gods." The news spread everywhere. That night the Aamai did not return, but Toka-gnutu went alone in the night, wearing his mask. Men were waiting for him. When he entered the house he was seized and killed. The men who had killed him said, "They were just men, they were deceiving us." But all except Toka-gnutu escaped from them.

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171 Those who advocate a Melanesian origin for the Easter Island culture might use this legend as a strong argument in favor of a possible connection between the Melanesian secret societies of masked people who begged food and terrified the uninitiated and a similar institution on Easter Island which is recorded only in the above tale. However, masks are termed *manu manu*, the term used for tapa kites and tapa images. Tepano is the only informant who claimed that masks were an ancient culture trait, but it must be remembered that Tepano spent many years in Chile where he had opportunities to see masquerades. There is little doubt that the element of the masks is an addition made by Tepano. In the text stress is put on the fact that the young men imitated the voice of the gods, and those spying on them recognized them as human when they spoke in a natural voice. A shortened version of this legend by Routledge (194, p. 224) twenty years ago does not refer to masks but to painting. The fraud was detected when the men were surprised washing their faces in a well. My version mentions the washing which is a meaningless detail if we do not know that they were painted.

### SALUTATIONS

201 The well-known Polynesian salutation of pressing noses has never been recorded for Easter Island but must have existed, as we find the word *hongu* (to press noses) still in use with the modern meanings "to smell" and "to kiss." I observed women sniffing their children to manifest their tenderness.

152 Easter Islanders wept when they met friends or relatives from whom they had been separated for a long time. This is related to the widespread Polynesian custom of weeping for those who have died during separation. The word *tangi* (to weep) is used in Easter Island tales in which people meet. I noticed that Easter Islanders, like other Polynesians, were inclined to weep over articles which reminded them of a dead relative. A woman asked me for her father's photograph which had been published in the report of a

483 That modern natives should have forgotten how the statues were transported is strange but understandable. First, we are not sure how thoroughly  
153 they were asked about this problem and second, they have a disconcerting way of forgetting the past. There is not a single native on the island who is able to explain the use of the stone adzes which are daily found on the ground, though these implements were manipulated by their great-grandfathers or even by their grandfathers. Solely because in 1868 the natives could not remember the technique of hauling statues, we must not conclude that the carving and transportation of the images ended many centuries ago. It is possible that only a few generations ago a war exterminated the expert stone carvers at Rano-raraku and thus interrupted the tradition.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF STONE STATUES

182 The true significance of stone statues is not known. There is no direct  
532 evidence that they were ever worshipped. Roggeveen's statement (186, p. 15), so frequently quoted as proof of an ancient cult of the images, is certainly too vague to allow any such conclusion: "... we noticed only that they kindle  
[20] fire in front of certain remarkably tall stone figures they set up; and thereafter squatting on their heels with heads bowed down, they bring the palms of their hands together and alternately raise and lower them."

The members of the Gonzalez expedition (90, p. 94) noticed that the natives appeared to "hold them [the images] in great veneration," and were "displeased" when the Spaniards approached to examine them closely. However, this fear might have concerned the ahu itself rather than the images. Cook (53, vol. 1, p. 296) collected the names of various statues and heard the natives use the word *ariki* in connection with certain of them. On this association Cook and Forster (83, vol. 1, p. 375) base their opinion that the statues "were monuments erected to the memory of some areekees, or kings."<sup>13</sup>

Later inquirers (Palmer, 171, p. 174; Jausen, 115, p. 245) were told the same things by natives raised in the pagan traditions. One of the Easter Islanders kidnapped and sent to Peru assured Gill (89, p. 213) that these statues had not been worshipped within the memory of man. Jausen's informants conveyed to him the impression that these statues were merely to decorate the ahu. The only image that is traditionally connected with a cult is the statue Hoa-haka-nana-ia or Taurarenga now in the British Museum. The image called Pou-haka-nonga (now on exhibition in Belgium under the name Hanga-oneone) of the ahu Ana-koiroroa at the bay of Hanga-roa is supposed to have been put there by some king to indicate to the fishermen the best place to catch tuna. Several statues were pointed out to Routledge (194, p. 193) as landmarks indicating boundaries.

<sup>13</sup> Transcribed phonetically the names collected by Cook and Forster are: Ko Tomoara, Marapate, Kanaro, Ko Uaituku, Matamata. The only names of statues recorded by present natives are: Hanga, Vohu, Tioko, Kere-mata-pou-ka-ngaro-hi-hiva.

609 us a quantity of dressed fowls and roots. One amongst these was an entirely white man, who was wearing white chocks of wood in his ears as large as one's fist, and bore a very devout appearance, so that we took him to be an idol priest. By some misadventure one of the natives who were on board the vessels got shot, and this must have caused a great consternation amongst them, for they all immediately sprang into the water and some swam away towards the shore, but others made off in their skiffs with all possible haste. We then with 150 men, soldiers as well as seamen, proceeded in the name of God ashore: and among them there was present our Admiral himself, by whom I was given command of a section of the party. I was the first who, at the disembarkation, set foot on the island. The inhabitants pressed round us in such crowds that we could scarcely pass along, so that we had to force a way through them; and, because some of them went so far as to lay hold of our arms (weapons), they were fired upon: by which they were direly alarmed, and dispersed, but collected again in swarms, though keeping some ten paces in front of us, believing that they were already out of range of our weapons at that distance.

609 Many of them were shot at this juncture; and among the  
439 slain lay the man who had been with us before, at which we were  
262 much grieved. In order to obtain possession of the bodies they  
congregated in great numbers, bringing with them presents of  
various kinds of fruits and vegetables, in order that we might the  
more readily surrender to them their slain. The consternation of  
these people was by no means abated: even their children's  
children in that place will in times to come be able to recount the  
story of it. They kept up an uncommon yelling: women as well  
as children brought palm branches, red and white streamers, and  
various kinds of fruits, Indian figs, large nuts, sugar-cane, roots,  
fowls,—alive, boiled, and roast. They even flung themselves at our  
[201] feet, displayed the streamers in front of us, and prostrated them-  
selves on their knees before us, presenting their palm branches  
as peace offerings. They also made tender of their womenkind,  
[548] asking whether we would accompany them into their huts, or had  
rather take them off to the ships. However, we did them no ill,  
but made a present to them of a piece of gaily coloured linen  
print between fifty and sixty ells in length, which they measured  
fathomwise more than a hundred times over. We also distributed  
coral baubles, small mirrors, etc., by which they might be assured  
that we were their friends. After that they brought us more than